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School Head Leadership: Basis of Elementary Schools' Performance in Castilla Districts, Division of Sorsogon

MERLYN JOY D. JADIE
https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0749-7590
Bicol College Graduate Schoossl, Legazpi City, Philippines

Corresponding author: merlynjoy.jadie@deped.gov.ph

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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to assess the relationship between school head leadership and school performance of elementary schools in Castilla Districts, Sorsogon. Specifically, it described the level of school heads' performance based on the OPCRF; described the performance of schools in terms of pupils' academic performance in languages, mathematics, and science, teachers' performance on IPCRF, and non-academic performance using key performance indicators (KPIs) such as enrollment rate, promotion rate, graduation rate, dropout rate, and cohort survival rate. Additionally, the study appraised the relationship between school heads' performance, teachers' performance, pupils' performance, and KPIs, and proposed a school improvement plan for SY 2025–2026. The researcher selected public schools from Castilla East, West, and South, where school heads and teachers from these schools were chosen as participants regardless of their designation, using purposive sampling, and included only Grade 3 and Grade 6 pupils' academic performance in English, Filipino, Mathematics and Science. These categories were assessed for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024

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only. Data was analyzed using descriptive and correlational research design, employing document analysis and Pearson r integrating bootstrapping. Findings showed outstanding performance of school heads and teachers, high academic performance of pupils, and overall positive trajectory in KPIs. However, no significant relationship was found among the performance of school heads, pupils and KPIs, though a significant relationship was observed between school heads and teachers in SY 2023–2024. The proposed school improvement plan focused on *Project S.E.A.L.*, *Project Husay Kasanayan*, and *Brigada Pagbasa, Pagbilang, at Paglikha*.

INTRODUCTION

School leadership has always been a priority in institutionalizing transformation in the educational landscape globally (Shah, 2023). Boosting the quality of education is a crucial focus as emphasized in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Target 4: Inclusive and Lifelong Learning (Ghamrawi, 2023; UNICEF, 2023). Among diverse responsibilities and current demands in education, adaptive and evidence-based decision-making is vital to balance and synergize complexities of leadership roles to uphold outstanding academic standards and build strong school support systems.

Timely learning progression and learning recovery efforts across the globe demands strong commitment, robust planning, and adequate funding to maintain healthy tolerance during its implementation (World Bank et al., 2022). The prerequisite to learning recovery is assessing the learning gap within the locale's context and using it as a guide in implementing instructions to solve the core issue. Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of policies and leadership practices associated with improved academic achievement provides significant data on the implementation gap and understanding of what works effectively in a specific setting (World Bank et al., 2022). Active collaboration with intergovernmental and non-government agencies within and across regions poses a stronger impact on the education system's capacity .These appeal to national educational systems and leaders who ignore the call of state intergovernmental organizations and continue to operate schools without making significant changes (Asadulla et al., 2023), even though making up for pupils' one-year learning loss would take two years of repeating interventions such as tutors, double math, summer school, and extended school year by 2.5 weeks to replace it, even though there was a 40% academic gain before the pandemic based on the reporting districts in the United States on its Education Recovery Scorecard program (Doan-Nguyen 2023).

In Southeast Asia, the findings of Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 report suggested that policymakers and school administrators lay the groundwork to develop educational strategies that enhance learning outcomes for every child and diminish disparities in primary education by responding to contextual factors of the schools (UNICEF & SEAMEO, 2020).

This served as a starting point in conducting in-depth analyses at the national, division, district, or school level, enabling comparisons from various perspectives and interests to gain a deeper insight into how different factors impact specific types of schools and the characteristics of children.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd), its executive body in delivering basic education, has initiated and adopted policies before and after the release of global and inter-regional status reports and surveys. Some of which are DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2023—National Learning Recovery Plan, Republic Act 11899 of 2022—EDCOM 2, DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2022—Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030, Sulong Edukalidad Framework, Philippine Development Plan and Ambisyon 2040 to name a few.

Focusing on BEDP 2030, a long-term comprehensive national policy for learning recovery, which aims to achieve higher key performance indicators by 2026 and 2030 in accordance with its baseline report (SY 2019–2020) for kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and out-of-school youths, has been in its full-time implementation since 2022. This regulation has a physical target for 2022–2026 and 2026–2030, with a mid-term review in SY 2025–2026. It revealed in its monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment framework for Pillar 3—Quality that a 96.56% elementary completion rate (CR) was achieved in 2019, which calls for amplifying institutional efforts to have 95% and 97% CR in 2026 and 2030, respectively. In the same report, the English and numeracy levels of grade three learners achieving near-proficient level or better shall reach 68.91% and 47.95%, respectively, by 2026. While grade six learners achieving near proficiency or better in literacy and numeracy shall be more or less 45% in the same target year (DepEd, 2022).

Thus, schools need to evolve the formulation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) by directing its focus on professional development of teachers and delivery of quality instruction to learners, an essential driver in a flourishing overall educational landscape at schools to achieve the BEDP targets. As supported by Department of Education Order No. 44, s. 2015, which highlights that SIP serves as a roadmap in establishing interventions.

In leading such initiatives, roles and responsibilities at par with the guidelines of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) must be upheld by the head of school. The performance of school leaders is reflected across five KRAs, or Key Result Areas, including 10% for leading strategically, 20% for managing school operations, 40% for focusing on teaching and learning, 15% for developing self and others, and 5% for plus factors. On the contrary, teachers' performance shall be pursuant to the guidelines of DepEd Memorandum No. 8, series of 2023—Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers and Multi-Year RPMS-PPST (DepEd, 2023). Timely technical assistance and support to school heads and teachers in implementing programs mapped in the school improvement plan have been extended by the district and division offices. Aside from this, the recovery program has been institutionalized

within the Bicol region through Regional Memorandum No. 104, s. 2022 and has now been adopted by other regional offices.

Despite various efforts to enhance school leadership in the Philippines, a research gap about understanding the specific connections between school heads' performance and school outcomes within Castilla districts still exists. While national policies stress the value of leadership in educational success, limited localized studies have been conducted to validate these claims using empirical data, which led to the exploration of school heads impact on the school's performance to project realization of BEDP targets by 2026 and 2030 in the target locale. In line with SDG 4, this study may serve as the foundation to ensure that all practices went beyond the extent of potential competencies, spearheading international standards.

Specifically, this study aimed to contribute to the research gap by describing the school heads' performance and school's performance in the elementary schools of Castilla districts, as well as its relationship. Through descriptive and correlational research design, the probe to gather evidence-based data for a comprehensive need assessment analysis of school heads' leadership competencies, teachers' performance, academic performance of Grade 3 and Grade 6 pupils in Languages—Filipino, English. Mathematics, and Science, and non-academic performance based on KPIs for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024 was enabled. This in-depth analysis was valuable in structuring the design of proposed School Improvement Plan (SIP) for SY 2025–2026 when the Mid-term Review of the BEDP was set to launch. The outcome of this study opts to provide key findings and recommendations to stakeholders committed to the learning recovery and acceleration of learners, upholding quality basic education for all.

FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework was developed to identify the possible procedure and outcomes in conducting the study. IPO model was utilized comprising Input, Process, and Output components. The inputs included were the following: (a) level of school heads' performance, a measurable leadership outcome, evaluated in accordance with a nationally framed set of standards, particularly in the context of administrative and instructional tasks, (b) level of schools' performance in terms of pupils' academic performance—level of pupils' achievement in performing learning competencies, teachers' performance—delivery of quality instruction, and non-academic performance based on KPIs—metrics used to monitor school performance, and (c) significant relationship among the level of performance of school heads, teachers, pupils and KPIs. The process taken were data gathering, data analysis and data interpretation, where the proposed school improvement plan served as its output.

This study was drawn upon four theories particularly Transformational Leadership Theory, Socio-cultural Theory of Development, Expectancy-Value

Theory, and Organizational Theory. Each theory embodied the key variables which served as a guide in making meaningful connections to the findings, and established foundation and synthesis to the researcher's theory, *Jadie's Theory of School Acceleration System*. A unifying theory emphasizing to have a collaborative school system with shared vision of acceleration driven by high level of expectancy and value; led by a transformational leader that understands the underlying school's contextual factors and needs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Developing a basis of elementary schools' performance in Castilla districts, Division of Sorsogon was the focus of the present study. Particularly, its specific objectives were: (1) describe the performance of elementary school heads based on OPCRF along with Key Results Areas—*Leading Strategically, Managing School Operations and Resources, Focusing on Teaching and Learning, Developing Self and Others, Building Connections* and *Plus Factor*; (2) describe the level of performance of elementary schools in terms of (a) pupils' academic performance in Languages, Mathematics and Science, (b) teachers' performance based on IPCRF along Key Results Areas—*Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners, Curriculum Planning and Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, Personal Growth and Professional Development*, and *Plus Factor*, (c) non-academic performance based on KPIs—enrollment, gross enrollment rate, net enrollment rate, promotion rate, dropout rate, graduation rate, and cohort survival rate; (3) appraise significant relationship among performance levels of school heads, pupils, teachers, and KPIs; and (4) propose school improvement plan for 2025–2026 based on the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design employing document analysis and correlational research design served as the blueprint of this study. These designs enabled the researcher to describe the performance of school heads, teachers, pupils and KPIs based on OPCRF, IPCRF, Summary of Grades and PIRPA/KPI form, respectively, for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. Also, the relationship among these variables were appraised based on the analyzed quantitative data. According to Hassan (2024), descriptive research design is a systematic methodology used to describe the characteristics of a population, event, or phenomenon and provides detailed information about existing conditions without examining causation; whereas documentary analysis is a method widely used to analyze content, context, and form of existing records to gain insights into human behavior, societal changes, and historical events (Hassan, 2023). While correlational

research design is a type of non-experimental research that measures two or more variables and assesses the relationship between them without any manipulation (Sreekumar, 2024).

Research Site

The study was conducted in the public elementary schools of Castilla, Sorsogon, located in the Bicol Region of the Philippines. It is clustered into three districts: Castilla East, West and South, which collectively encompass 39 schools under the supervision of DepEd Schools Division of Sorsogon. These schools cater to approximately 379 teachers and 39 school heads, providing a diverse educational landscape ideal for assessing the performance of school head leadership, as well as academic and non-academic outcomes.

Recent local studies conducted in Castilla districts have revealed the need for collaborative and inclusive leadership models (Llanto, 2023), urgent professional development needs of elementary teachers (Lebitania, 2023), and the impact and challenges of community involvement in DepEd programs, revealing barriers that limit effective partnerships (Tan, 2022).

Participants

Castilla East, West, and South were comprised of thirteen (13) schools each, for a total of thirty-nine (39) public elementary schools. The distribution of school heads who participated in each district were as follows: four (4) from Castilla East, five (5) from Castilla West, and four (4) from Castilla South. The number of teacher participants for SY 2022–2023 was 119 and 127 teacher participants for SY 2023–2024, which brings to 132 and 140 total participants, respectively.

The selection of participants was done through purposive and convenience sampling, with targets on individuals involved in leadership and classroom instruction that are accessible and valuable to the realization of the research objectives. Convenience sampling was used to gather data from the participants, particularly school heads and teachers, as it allowed the researcher to include individuals who were easily accessible and available within the time and resource constraints.

Moreover, purposive sampling was applied to select the pupils for the study. Specifically, only Grade 3 and Grade 6 pupils were included, as these grade levels correspond to the completion of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, making them crucial for evaluating academic performance milestones. According to Hassan (2022), convenience sampling is a non-probability technique that involves selecting participants based on their ease of access, availability or proximity, while purposive sampling is a non-probability method where participants are deliberately chosen due to their knowledge and relevance to the research topic (Hassan, 2024). This combination of methods ensured the collection of both practical and targeted data necessary to meet its objectives. However, poses limitations which

may affect the generalizability, hence Bias-Corrected Accelerated Bootstrap was integrated in testing correlation to ensure 95% confidence level to the inferential statistics results with 1000 resampling of original data. The participation rate of schools in Castilla districts was affected by several factors. Due to time constraints, reassignment of school heads, retirement and health-related issues, the researcher was not able to complete data from all elementary schools of target locale. These limitations may have had implications on the comprehensiveness of the data and should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Instrumentation

This study utilized document analysis of gathered documents—OPCRF, IPCRF, Summary of Grades and PIRPA/KPI form, which are standardized tools of DepEd, therefore no instrument validation procedures were necessary. The utilization of these forms was in accordance with DepEd Order No. 2, s. 2015 (*Guidelines on the Establishment and Implementation of the Results-Based Performance Management System in the Department of Education*), DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 (*Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program*), and DepEd Order No. 29, s. 2022 (*Agency Performance Measurement Matrix and Program Implementation Review and Performance Assessment*).

To ensure the consistency and accuracy in performance ratings both in OPCRF and IPCRF, DepEd utilizes a standardized transmutation table to convert raw performance scores into corresponding adjectival ratings. The Results-based Performance Management System (RPMS) Rating Transmutation converts raw scores into descriptive performance ratings based on quality, effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness. Its scale includes *Outstanding* (4.500–5.000) which represents exceptional achievement in all areas of responsibility; *Very Satisfactory* (3.500–4.499) indicates meeting goals and targets that exceeds expectations; *Satisfactory* (2.500–3.499) means personnel meets expectations for work quality, efficiency, and timeliness; Unsatisfactory (1.500–2.499) pertains to failed meeting expectations and critical goals; and *Poor* (1.000–1.499) means performance consistently below expectations and needs improvement.

Based on DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 (*Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program*), the pupils' academic performance is being assessed in terms of written works, performance tasks, and quarterly assessment. The learners' progress was interpreted in the following grading scale: *Outstanding* (90-100), *Very Satisfactory* (85-89), *Satisfactory* (80-84), and *Fairly Satisfactory* (75-79) were considered passed, while *Did Not Meet Expectations* (below 75) means failed.

In terms of non-academic performance, it is measured through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are often available in the School Report Card and reflected annually in the Program Implementation Review and Performance Assessment (PIRPA) report. These KPIs include gross enrollment

rate, net enrollment rate, promotion rate, dropout rate, graduation rate, and cohort survival rate. To assist in the data collection process, the researcher provided a KPI form with KPI computation excel file to ensure the accuracy of the data in adherence to the formula stipulated in DepEd Order No. 29, s. 2022 (*Agency Performance Measurement Matrix and Program Implementation Review and Performance Assessment*) which includes: *gross enrollment rate*—computed by dividing the total enrollment by the estimated community population of 6 to 11 years old children, then multiplying the quotient by 100; *net enrollment rate*, determined by dividing the total enrollment of 6-11-year-old children by the estimated community population of 6-11-year-old, then multiplying the quotient by 100; *promotion rate*—calculated by dividing the number of promotes for the current year by the enrollment of the previous year, then multiplying the quotient by 100; *dropout rate* is computed by dividing the number of dropouts for the current year by the enrollment of the previous year, then multiplying the quotient by 100; *graduation rate*, determined by dividing the number of Grade 6 graduates by the Grade 6 enrollment, then multiplying the quotient by 100; and *cohort survival rate*, computed by dividing the number of grade 6 enrollment for the current school year by the grade 1 enrollment from five years ago, then multiplying the quotient by 100.

In the time of completion of data collection, the retrieved documents were organized and consolidated according to the three districts. Statistical analyses were then conducted to describe and examine the significant relationships among variables. The findings were interpreted to draw valuable conclusions and provide evidence-based data which may address gaps in existing literature and provide insights to stakeholders to improve educational practice and outcomes in learning recovery.

Research Ethics Protocols

Ethical protocols were observed throughout the study. The research was conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines and approved by the appropriate ethics committee. The researcher ensured that the target subjects of the study participated voluntarily and were fully informed of the purpose of the research, their right to provide information at their own discretion, and their right to refuse to share any data they found uncomfortable. The researcher also ensured the confidentiality of their identities and the information they provided. The informed consent letter was voluntarily signed, proper channels of communication and procedures were done in collecting the data, and photos for documentation were taken with consent.

Data Collection

The researcher followed proper data collection procedures. For preliminaries, an intent letter to conduct the study was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of SDO Sorsogon. Upon approval, the attached endorsement

letter was sent with transmittal letters personally given to the supervisors and school heads. With the consent of the district supervisors, school heads, and teachers, the necessary documents were collected and utilized with confidentiality in line with the ethical protocols. To ensure the timely release and retrieval of documents, regular follow-ups were made through phone call, text message, email and chat. Most appropriate statistical analyses were done to treat gathered data. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated to contribute to the literature gap and the stakeholders who are the beneficiaries of this study.

Statistical Techniques

The data collected in this study were analyzed using document analysis, integrating descriptive and inferential statistical method. The *documentary analysis* explores original documents, that is, those that provide the first occurrence of a piece of work inclined to be detailed in nature and can, sometimes, be challenging to access (Dunlop, 2022). In this study, documentary analysis was used to identify and analyze the performances of the school heads, pupils, teachers, and non-academic performances based on KPIs. These documents were gathered from each school based on the OPCRF, IPCRF, Summary of Grades, and KPIs.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to present and analyze the results of this study. Descriptive statistics were employed to describe, tally, assess, and interpret the pertinent documents gathered, such as performance ratings, summaries of final ratings and grades, and key performance indicator results. The statistical tools used in descriptive statistics were mean, weighted mean, and percentage. Inferential statistics were used to determine the significant relationship between continuous variables with the statistical tools Pearson's correlation coefficient r and bootstrap. Pearson's correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Turney, 2024).

Pearson's r, also known as Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, was utilized to assess the relationship between the school heads' performance, pupils' performance, teachers' performance, and KPIs performance in Objective 3. This correlation coefficient is computed by calculating the covariance between two variables and dividing it by the product of their standard deviations.

To enhance the robustness of the statistical results, this study employed *bootstrapping* with 1000 resamples, utilizing the *bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) method* with a 95% confidence interval to address potential biases and improve the accuracy of estimates. Bootstrap makes an inference about an estimate of a sample mean for a population parameter on sample data (Yen, 2019). Bootstrapping is a resampling technique that generates multiple samples from the original dataset, enabling the distribution of statistics and providing more reliable inference, most especially if there is non-normal data distribution and a small sample size. The BCa method addresses potential bias in bootstrap distribution. It incorporates a bias-correction factor and an acceleration term where the bias-correction factor adjusts the bootstrap confidence interval, while

the acceleration term accounts for the skewness in the bootstrap distribution (Chandramouli, 2023). This approach enhances the credibility of statistical findings by reducing the impact of outliers and increasing the generalizability, which strengthens the reliability of the relationship among the variables of study.

The researcher used *Microsoft Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)* to organize and analyze the gathered data. Microsoft Excel was used for data entry, organization, and basic calculations like mean, percentage, and weighted mean, which helped in making the dataset accurate and consistent. Meanwhile, SPSS was utilized to perform advanced statistical analysis (inferential statistics) to determine the significant relationship of variables and their confidence interval. Using these methods, the researcher ensured a systematic and efficient approach to data analysis, which improved the validity of the research findings and conclusions, aiding in achieving this study's objectives.

Hemphill's Coefficient Interpretation was used to interpret Pearson's correlation coefficient, providing specific benchmarks to evaluate the strengths in correlations, where less than .20, between .20 and .30, and greater than .30 signify small, medium, and large effects, respectively. This threshold is empirically grounded on effect sizes in terms of behavioral data in education, psychology, and sociology, where multiple interacting factors intervene, making strong correlations rare, as revealed in a synthesis of 380 meta-analyses in the social sciences (Hemphill, 2003).

The findings were presented in comprehensive tables and graphs for school year 2022-2023 and school year 2023-2024 to provide evidence-based data on the performance of school head leadership and the performance of the school in terms of pupils' academic achievement in Filipino, English, Mathematics, and Science in Grade 3 and Grade 6; teachers' performance; and key performance indicators in the elementary schools in Castilla Districts. Further interpretation and implication of the results gave insights into how school leadership competencies affect academic, non-academic, and teachers' performance. This analytical approach facilitated the formulation of profound conclusions and recommendations aimed at improving school management in line with the Basic Education Development Plan 2030 and the Division Targets.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section contains the results collected by the researcher with regards to the level of performance of elementary school heads, and the schools' performance. Particularly the performance of the schools was described along the following: pupils' academic performance, teachers' performance, and non-academic performance based on KPIs. Moreover, the relationship among these were appraised. A detailed school improvement plan was developed in line with the analysis of findings.

Performance of School Heads based on OPCRF

This part contains data that describes the performance of school heads based on OPCRF along five KRAs for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. Notably, there were variation on the strands evaluated in both school years, with eleven (11) repeated PPSSH strands. Ratings for SY 2022-2023 was self-reported data, while SY 2023-2024 ratings was similarly self-reported but has undergone further validation of MOVs by SDO Sorsogon. Moreover, the strands of the latter year were aligned on the released *Contextualized Multi-Year RPMS-PPSSH Tools for DepEd Region V School Heads* that along with Division Memorandum No. 72, s. 2024, an orientation on its policies and utilization procedures was conducted on April 8 to 12, 2024 among the school heads.

Table 1

Performance of School Heads in KRA 1 and 2

Strand	SY 2022-2023								SY 2023-2024							
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Key Results Area 1: Leading Strategically																
PPSSH 1.1* Vision, mission and core values	4.67	O	5.00	O	4.92	O	4.86	O	4.09	VS	4.60	O	4.84	O	4.51	O
PPSSH 1.2* School planning and implementation	4.75	O	5.00	O	4.92	O	4.89	O	4.34	VS	4.53	O	4.58	O	4.48	VS
PPSSH 1.7 Monitoring and evaluation processes and tools	4.50	O	5.00	O	4.00	VS	4.50	O								
Average	4.64	O	5.00	O	4.61	O	4.75	O	4.21	VS	4.57	O	4.71	O	4.49	VS
Key Results Area 2: Managing School Operations and Resources																
PPSSH 2.1 Records management	4.75	O	5.00	O	5.00	O	4.92	O								
PPSSH 2.2* Financial management	4.75	O	5.00	O	5.00	O	4.92	O	4.84	O	4.47	VS	4.42	VS	4.57	O

PPSSH 2.3* School facilities and equipment	4.50	O	4.73	O	5.00	O	4.75	O	4.50	O	4.30	VS	4.25	VS	4.35	VS
PPSSH 2.4* Management of staff	4.67	O	4.93	O	4.75	O	4.78	O	4.67	O	4.87	O	4.67	O	4.74	O
PPSSH 2.5 School safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation and resiliency									4.00	VS	4.000	VS	4.00	VS	4.00	VS
Average	4.67	O	4.92	O	4.94	O	4.84	O	4.50	O	4.41	VS	4.33	VS	4.41	VS

*Note: *Repeated PPSSH strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.*

Table 1 shows the comparative mean ratings and adjectival interpretations of school heads' performance in three districts under Key Result Areas (KRA) 1 and 2. The Key Results Area 1: Leading Strategically based on OPCRF, intends to collaborate with school personnel in communicating the DepEd Vision, Mission, and Core Values to the wider school community to strengthen shared understanding and alignment of school policies, programs, projects, and activities. It also includes Under KRA 1, *Leading Strategically*, with an average mean score of 4.75, school heads employed an outstanding performance in areas, "vision, mission, and core values", "school planning and implementation, and "monitoring and evaluation processes and tools" for school year 2022–2023. District B and C maintained an outstanding performance in the succeeding year, while District A obtained a slight decrease in its mean scores, with 4.21, interpreted as very satisfactory. This variation may provide an opportunity to share best practices from districts with consistent high scores.

These findings portray the commitment of school heads in communicating the vision, mission, and core values to its key stakeholders and how they value planning and monitoring program implementations. It affirms that effective process of planning, implementing, and monitoring comes with strategic leadership guided by a shared vision among partners that build the school system. Effective school leadership plays a critical role in promoting quality education through clear communication of the school's vision, mission, and core values. A strategic approach to planning, implementation, and monitoring has been recognized as essential to building a responsive and sustainable school system. It was supported by the study of Amos et al. (2022), which emphasized that

the crucial mechanism for a participative leadership is a strategical shared vision among teachers and student leaders, who are not just designers but the main vision implementers. Verano et al. (2024) have found that strategic planning is statistically significant predictor of improvement in quality education.

The Key Results Area 2 centers on managing systems and processes in schools as enacted by the school heads. It highlights the commitment of the school heads towards maximizing organizational health. For KRA 2, *Managing School Operations and Resources*, a consistent outstanding performance in records, staff, and financial management was employed by the school heads. On the other hand, "school safety" garnered the lowest average mean score of 4.00 and a slight decrease in managing school facilities and equipment, though interpreted as very satisfactory, still poses a need for improvement. District A maintained an outstanding performance in both school years, while District B and C may adopt practices to improve and sustain its financial and facilities management. Overall, staff management was outstanding among three districts, yet there's a need for enhancement in school safety measures.

These findings imply that continuous professional development in managing school operations and resources in adherence to national policies and guidelines shall be given importance to strengthen and sustain school heads' management competencies, a key determinant in the delivery of quality basic primary education. Literature has highlighted that school heads' management competencies—particularly in resource utilization—is closely linked to school performance outcomes. These findings imply that continuous professional development in managing school operations and resources, in adherence to national policies and guidelines, should be prioritized to strengthen and sustain the leadership capacities of school heads. Valenzuela and Buenvinida (2021) have found that competencies under KRA 2 has significant impact on the quality and efficiency of school performance, with the focus on staff management as its main significant predictor. It is supported by the case study of Ho (2023), which revealed how a school head's strategic management of fund affects teachers' positive perception on the utilization of weighted student funding system in maintaining operations of the school and initiate further innovation.

Table 2 presents the performance of school heads along KRA 3 and KRA 4. It shows that school heads obtained a consistent overall outstanding performance in KRA 3, *Focusing on Teaching and Learning.* KRA 3 concentrates on the work of the school heads in promoting quality teaching and learning. This highlights highest performance in "teaching standards and pedagogy" with 4.89 and 4.80 average mean scores for two consecutive years and "learner achievement and other performance indicators" with 4.81 average mean score, while "teacher performance feedback" got the lowest average mean score of 4.46 yet still indicates a very satisfactory performance.

These findings emphasized the strong dedication among the school heads on its role in delivering technical assistance to teachers in terms of contextualization

and implementation of learning standards, teaching standards and pedagogy, performance feedback, learner achievement, learning assessment and managing learning environment. Hence, this implies that school heads prioritized and valued the influence of instructional leadership in achieving effective curriculum implementation and better school performance.

Instructional leadership has emerged as a key function of school heads, particularly in supporting teachers and ensuring effective curriculum implementation. For Kilag et al. (2023), a critical role has been played by instructional leadership in developing effectiveness of school performance, which stresses a demand for partnership among stakeholders. It is supported by Bellibas et al. (2025), which also views its crucial impact in teachers—traditional and reform-based—professional growth, and academic achievement in mathematics. Moreover, Daing and Mustapha (2023) found significant association with instructional leadership and teachers' self-belief and performance.

Table 2

Performance of School Heads in KRA 3 and 4

Strand	SY 2022-2023								SY 2023-2024							
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Key Results Area 3: Focusing on Teaching and Learning																
PPSSH 3.1 School-based review, contextualization and implementation of learning standards									4.50	O	4.67	O	4.92	O	4.70	O
PPSSH 3.2* Teaching standards and pedagogies	5.00	O	5.00	O	4.67	O	4.89	O	4.67	O	4.80	O	4.92	O	4.80	O
PPSSH 3.3 Teacher performance feedback	4.33	VS	4.53	O	4.50	O	4.46	VS								
PPSSH 3.4 Learner achievement and other performance indicators									4.63	O	4.80	O	5.00	O	4.81	O
PPSSH 3.5* Learning assessment	4.75	O	4.80	O	4.50	O	4.68	O	4.25	VS	4.80	O	4.92	O	4.66	O

PPSSH 3.6 Learning environment									4.50	O	4.90	O	4.88	O	4.76	O		
Average	4.69	O	4.78	O	4.56	O	4.68	O	4.51	O	4.79	O	4.93	O	4.74	O		
Key Results Area 4: Developing Self and Others																		
PPSSH 4.1 Personal and professional development									5.00	O	4.80	O	4.92	O	4.91	O		
PPSSH 4.4* Performance management	4.75	O	4.94	O	4.50	O	4.73	O	4.00	VS	4.40	VS	4.75	O	4.38	VS		
PPSSH 4.5* Professional development of school personnel	4.75	O	4.74	O	5.00	O	4.83	O	4.75	O	4.87	O	4.75	O	4.79	O		
PPSSH 4.8 Rewards and recognition mechanism	4.75	O	4.40	VS	4.92	O	4.69	O										
Average	4.75	O	4.69	O	4.81	O	4.75	O	4.58	O	4.69	O	4.81	O	4.69	O		

*Note: *Repeated PPSSH strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.*

Fostering personal and professional growth among school personnel is essential for sustaining educational quality and leadership effectiveness. It recognizes the role of school heads in nurturing themselves and others that are committed to team's effectiveness. For KRA 4, *Developing Self and Others*, school heads achieved consistently high level of performance among four strands, obtaining 4.75 and 4.60 average mean scores for two school years, where "personal and professional development" got the highest average mean score of 4.91—outstanding, and lowest average mean score in "performance management" with of 4.38—very satisfactory. 4.91—outstanding, and lowest average mean score in "performance management" with of 4.38—very satisfactory. This denotes strong monitoring and evaluation of introduced professional development activities has been made which may strengthened skills and addressed core behavioral and developmental needs of personnel. In addition, a school rewards and recognition system were established to uphold exemplary performance among stakeholders. The results also indicate an ensured career progression among school personnel through its active performance management system, yet there is still a need for improving its effective monitoring that may help on the overall advancement of office performance as well.

Therefore, it indicates the importance of professional development in upskilling and shaping core behavioral and developmental needs through a well-structured performance management system and mechanisms of rewards and recognition—driver of excellence and school success. It affirms the theory of expectancy and value that the motivation of personnel is exemplified by high expectations of an outstanding performance and high regard on their act of service, prominently recognized and rewarded. Professional development is a vital component in enhancing school personnel's capabilities, motivation, and long-term effectiveness. The study of Lee et al. (2023) highlights the integration of different modalities in continuous professional development, like the utilization of technological software in facilitating school-based professional growth. Lay et al. (2020) have asserted that online professional development programs for teachers have been more empirical and refined for the past ten years which enables exploration to meaningful quality teaching practices.

Building strong connections within and beyond the school community is a critical aspect of effective educational leadership. This area focuses on evaluating accomplishment of school organizations, engaging the community promoting inclusive practices. As shown in Table 3, KRA 5, *Building Connections* and *Plus Factor*, an outstanding performance was demonstrated by the school heads in school year 2022–2023 with 4.82 average mean score, while a stable very satisfactory performance was observed in school year 2023–2024 across all strands with an average mean score of 4.14 in KRA 5 and 3.52 in *Plus Factor*. The slight decrease in the performance entails the need for strengthening and sustaining leadership practices in building connections and engaging in activities beyond the KRAs that serve as an avenue for initiating innovation and showcasing competitiveness of the school that move past the school setting; focusing on the two least performed strands, "community engagement" with 4.03 average mean score and the "plus factor" with 3.52 average mean score.

These findings suggest that technical assistance be given to school heads in order to address challenges in enhancing the stakeholders' engagement, a crucial component of a school support system. As a partner in developing better academic achievement and successful school performance, strong commitment to this shared vision shall be rekindled, as it reciprocates a positive impact in enriching the community's prosperity through its empowered youth. Smith and Williams (2023) emphasized how effective communication within home and school significantly contributes to parental involvement. Their findings further suggest that inclusive communication approaches that involve pupils, teachers, parents, community, and administrators contribute to better educational planning and implementation be initiated.

In relation to this, school organizations—School Parent-Teacher Association (SPTA), Faculty Club, Supreme Elementary Learner Government (SELG), YES-O, and other learner organizations shall not be established only on the surface but must have an active exemplary function and strongly driven collaboration

that leads to a more evident accomplishments addressing the present needs of the school. Enabling all stakeholders to play identifiable roles valuable to its success.

Al-Thani (2024) has explored the differences on stakeholders' level of involvement in formulating educational policies of Singapore and Finland. The findings revealed that Singapore has centralized policymaking where external stakeholders serve as consultants but has minimal influence in decision-making. On the other hand, Finland employs a decentralized system where autonomy was exercised by school leaders at the same time active involvement was encouraged among its stakeholders. With varying degrees of engagement, both have its distinct feature in contributing to effective formulation of policies. On the other hand, Pilpil et al. (2023) have identified that financial disclosure and communication to the SPTA were the concerns in their exploration of stakeholders' satisfaction in terms of educational services. They have suggested that clear communication of improved management of funds cultivate trust and establish smooth coordination with the stakeholders. The regulatory basis in the management and operations of SPTA in the Philippines is stipulated in DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2022, Omnibus Guidelines on the Regulation of Operations of Parent-Teacher Associations. This order declared the distinct roles of officers, privileges, financial and operational accountability, assemblies, and prohibited provisions among others helpful in streamlining SPTA activities. Therefore, it is important to clearly convey the latest regulations to the stakeholders to clearly distinguish the level and processes of involvement to have better implementation of school policies and programs.

Table 3
Performance of School Heads in KRA 5 and Plus Factor

Strand	SY 2022-2023								SY 2023-2024							
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Key Results Area 5: Building Connections & Plus Factor																
PPSSH 5.2* Management of school operations	4.50	O	4.80	O	4.75	O	4.68	O	4.17	VS	4.33	VS	4.25	VS	4.25	VS
PPSSH 5.3 Inclusive practice	5.00	O	4.80	O	4.75	O	4.85	O								
PPSSH 5.5* Community engagement	4.75	O	5.00	O	5.00	O	4.92	O	4.00	VS	4.10	VS	4.00	VS	4.03	VS
Average	4.75	O	4.87	O	4.83	O	4.82	O	4.08	VS	4.22	VS	4.12	VS	4.14	VS
Plus Factor									2.25	U	4.80	O	3.50	VS	3.52	VS

*Note: *Repeated PPSSH strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.*

Elementary Schools Performance

This part presents the data on the performance of elementary schools in Castilla Districts, Division of Sorsogon. It highlights the pupils' academic performance in Languages, Mathematics, and Science. Also, it illustrates the teachers' performance based on IPCRF and the findings on the schools' non-academic performance based on key performance indicators particularly on enrollment, promotion, dropout, graduation, and cohort survival.

Pupils' Academic Performance in Languages

This section describes the academic performance of Grade 3 and Grade 6 pupils in languages, specifically in Filipino and English for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. Filipino, as a subject in the curriculum, played a pivotal role in preserving and acknowledging cultural heritage, understanding history, cultures, and values, ensuring and promoting integrity and national identity. As shown in Table 4, in accordance with the Filipino subject, majority of Grade 3 pupils were very satisfactory with a slight increase, from 33.87% to 36.98% within the two school years. Meanwhile, the least percentage of Grade 3 pupils, 3.02% and 3.10%, were unable to meet expectations. The results also shows that 33.40% or

majority of Grade 6 pupils perform very satisfactory in Filipino, while a slight decrease to 32.67% in the same level was observed on the next year. Moreover, there was approximately 1% among Grade 6 learners that couldn't meet the expectations.

Table 4

Pupils' Academic Performance in Languages

Academic Performance	SY 2022-2023				SY 2023-2024			
	District A	District B	District C	Total	District A	District B	District C	Total
Filipino (Grade 3)								
Outstanding	19.13	16.77	20.39	18.75	16.46	15.09	27.75	19.48
Very Satisfactory	33.33	35.40	32.89	33.87	37.80	42.45	29.48	36.98
Satisfactory	24.59	35.40	26.32	28.63	26.83	26.89	24.28	26.05
Fairly Satisfactory	16.94	11.80	18.42	15.73	13.41	12.74	17.34	14.39
Did Not Meet Expectations	6.01	0.62	1.97	3.02	5.49	2.83	1.16	3.10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Filipino (Grade 6)								
Outstanding	23.04	18.59	21.16	21.08	16.75	17.11	18.67	17.41
Very Satisfactory	29.84	41.03	30.69	33.40	38.28	28.51	31.33	32.67
Satisfactory	33.51	31.41	27.51	30.78	24.40	44.30	33.73	34.49
Fairly Satisfactory	11.52	8.33	20.63	13.81	18.66	9.65	15.66	14.43
Did Not Meet Expectations	2.09	0.64	0	0.93	1.91	0.44	0.60	1.00
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
English (Grade 3)								
Outstanding	15.85	15.53	18.42	16.53	14.02	13.68	22.54	16.58
Very Satisfactory	26.78	27.95	31.58	28.63	28.05	33.02	31.21	30.97
Satisfactory	21.86	36.02	23.03	26.81	32.93	34.91	21.97	30.24
Fairly Satisfactory	28.96	19.88	23.68	24.40	19.51	15.09	21.39	18.40
Did Not Meet Expectations	6.56	0.62	3.29	3.63	5.49	3.30	2.89	3.83
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
English (Grade 6)								
Outstanding	21.99	17.95	17.99	19.40	11.48	14.47	18.07	14.43
Very Satisfactory	32.46	36.54	22.22	30.04	40.67	37.72	25.30	35.32

Satisfactory	24.08	33.97	28.57	28.54	27.75	34.65	30.72	31.18
Fairly Satisfactory	19.37	10.90	31.22	21.08	18.66	12.72	25.30	18.24
Did Not Meet Expectations	2.09	0.64	0	0.93	1.44	0.44	0.60	0.83
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Performance levels were categorized as follows: Outstanding (90–100), Very Satisfactory (85–89), Satisfactory (80–84), and Fairly Satisfactory (75–79), all of which are considered passing. A score below 75 (Did Not Meet Expectations) indicates a failing mark. Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.

These results illustrate that 96.98% and 96.90% of Grade 3 pupils have met nearly satisfactory performance or better in Filipino in two consecutive school years, respectively. While 99.07% and 99% among Grade 6 pupils achieved nearly satisfactory or better in the same subject area. The slight increase on Grade 3 learners' performance entails improvement, yet ample support to the struggling learners should be provided, especially on the districts with high numbers of possible grade repeaters. The satisfactory turnout of Grade 6 was high, but the salient decrease in high performing levels which led to having most of these learners achieved only the satisfactory level or lower may be a theme for further exploration.

In the study of Ronquillo-Elvina and Quirap (2024), the academic performance in Filipino, English, and other core subject areas was significantly associated with self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation. So, it suggests that teachers must remind the learners not to settle for less but achieve higher levels of academic performance. Pinaranda and Sario (2024) have found that differentiated instruction has a positive significant effect on better learning outcomes and attitude in Filipino as a subject. Hence, it is important to provide seminars or trainings to aid teachers effectively implement techniques in employing this strategy and address its subsequent challenges.

English, as a medium of communication across the world, it also played a vital role in developing personal and social skills enhancement. In terms of the academic performance in English, the results show that majority of Grade 3 pupils, 28.63% and 30.97%, have achieved very satisfactory performance in two consecutive years, respectively. In a similar manner, majority of Grade 6 pupils (30.04% and 35.32%) has performed very satisfactorily. It is notable that both grade levels achieved a slight increase especially in higher levels of academic performance. However, there were still number of pupils who did not meet the expectations particularly 3.02% and 3.10% in Grade 3, while 0.93% and 1% in Grade 6, correspondingly. Overall, within the two school years, there were 96.98% and 96.90% of Grade 3 pupils as well as 99.07% and 99% of Grade 6 pupils that achieved nearly satisfactory or better in English. These implies that the curriculum implementation and interventions have been effective in

developing and achieving learning competencies in English across both grade levels. However, the minimal yet stable group of at-risk learners highlights the need for targeted remediation.

Elkhayma (2022) have emphasized that non-native English-speaking countries have used the English language as a medium of instruction in teaching academic subjects as a way of achieving globalization and developing better quality of academic achievement. In addition, there were also studies that explored the impact of different strategies in teaching this subject area. Gul et al. (2024) have found that learning through collaborative language has driven better listening and speaking test scores than traditional book reading method. Asio and Pasubillo (2023) have determined the effectiveness of virtual differentiated instruction in English proficiency enhancement. Tus et al. (2020) have suggested that pupils' study habits like taking notes and improving reading proficiency, aid in attaining better academic outcomes. Hence, it is important for teachers to explore different trends on research-based strategies and help learners develop learning patterns and discipline.

Pupils' Academic Performance in Mathematics and Science

This section presents the academic performance of Grade 3 and Grade 6 pupils in Mathematics and Science for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. Mathematics, one of the foundations towards career and academic success. It leverages networks and connections through mathematical procedures, structures, and situational analysis, which may enable us to solve complex problems and reality issues. Table 5 shows that the academic performance in Mathematics includes 96.37% and 96.17% of Grade 3 pupils along with 99.07% and 99% of Grade 6 pupils who achieved nearly satisfactory or better for two consecutive school years, respectively. On the other hand, it also shows the academic performance in Science, with 96.98% and 96.9% of Grade 3 pupils, as well as 99.07% and 99% of Grade 6 pupils with similar nearly satisfactory or better achievement.

Consistently, 29% of Grade 3 pupils performed satisfactorily in Mathematics, while a majority of 33.15% of very satisfactory learners were attained in the later school year. There was also a notable upward trend in the Grade 6 pupils with satisfactory performance, from 33.77% to 35.32%. The number of pupils who did not meet the expectations has been stable to almost 1% among Grade 6 pupils and approximately 4% among Grade 3 pupils.

Table 5
Pupils' Academic Performance in Mathematics and Science

Academic Performance	SY 2022-2023				SY 2023-2024			
	District A	District B	District C	Total	District A	District B	District C	Total
				Mathematics (Grade 3)				
Outstanding	19.67	16.77	21.71	19.35	14.02	12.74	25.43	17.12
Very Satisfactory	24.59	28.57	28.95	27.22	34.15	35.38	29.48	33.15
Satisfactory	22.40	37.89	28.29	29.23	28.05	32.08	26.59	29.14
Fairly Satisfactory	26.23	16.15	18.42	20.56	18.29	15.57	16.76	16.76
Did Not Meet Expectations	7.10	0.62	2.63	3.63	5.49	4.25	1.73	3.83
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
				Mathematics (Grade 6)				
Outstanding	17.80	10.26	13.23	13.99	13.88	9.65	14.46	12.44
Very Satisfactory	31.41	26.92	29.63	29.48	34.93	31.58	23.49	30.51
Satisfactory	25.65	45.51	32.28	33.77	27.27	41.23	37.35	35.32
Fairly Satisfactory	23.04	16.66	24.87	21.83	22.01	17.11	24.10	20.73
Did Not Meet Expectations	2.09	0.64	0	0.93	1.91	0.44	0.60	1.00
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
				Science (Grade 3)				
Outstanding	20.22	18.01	22.37	20.16	17.07	17.45	29.48	21.13
Very Satisfactory	26.78	34.16	32.24	30.85	34.15	41.04	32.37	36.25
Satisfactory	23.50	34.78	26.32	28.02	28.66	28.30	22.54	26.59
Fairly Satisfactory	24.04	12.42	16.45	17.94	14.63	10.85	13.87	12.93
Did Not Meet Expectations	5.46	0.62	2.63	3.02	5.49	2.36	1.73	3.10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

	Science (Grade 6)							
Outstanding	19.90	11.54	19.58	17.35	13.40	13.16	17.47	14.43
Very Satisfactory	30.37	37.82	31.75	33.02	42.58	33.77	28.31	35.32
Satisfactory	27.23	38.46	29.10	31.16	20.57	33.33	39.16	30.51
Fairly Satisfactory	20.42	11.54	19.58	17.54	21.53	19.30	14.46	18.74
Did Not Meet Expectations	2.09	0.64	0	0.93	1.91	0.44	0.60	1.00
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Performance levels were categorized as follows: Outstanding (90–100), Very Satisfactory (85–89), Satisfactory (80–84), and Fairly Satisfactory (75–79), all of which are considered passing. A score below 75 (Did Not Meet Expectations) indicates a failing mark. Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.

These findings suggest that the performance exhibited by the Grade 3 and 6 pupils in Mathematics have slight difference in distribution across academic levels with the decrease in numbers of outstanding learners. Even there is high and consistent percentage of learners who were satisfactory, still these impose varying levels of learning needs that must be catered in order to enhance academic achievement to higher performing standards. Intervention and remediation may be provided to struggling learners and exploration to the possible factors of learning difficulties in this subject area may be conducted. It also notes that employed teaching strategies and methods in Mathematics be assessed on its effectiveness to affirm which have contribute to positive academic outcomes. Furthermore, it denotes that achieving better results may require teaching beyond traditional means and leads to redirect focus on upskilling teaching pedagogies—21st century techniques that are learner-centered, interactive and technology-integrated—making more meaningful instruction in solving real-life problems and enhance critical and analytical thinking skills of learners. Hence, indicates a need for policies and programs from policymakers and administrators that supplement a resource-rich learning environment and support continuous professional development among teachers that strengthen mastery of content knowledge in Mathematics and flexibility on facilitating instruction adapting to the diverse learning needs and trends in education.

Gómez-Talal et al. (2024) have found that the significant disparities in the academic performance in Mathematics were associated to availability of resources, socioeconomic backgrounds, geographical location and gender. Oribhador (2020) emphasized that activity-based teaching methods delivers better learning outcomes than traditional lecture methods. In a similar study, Ng and Karjanto (2023) have also found that active learning, like solving problems based on real-life situations, have significantly contributed to better performance than those learners engaged with passive listening during traditional lecture.

Science is one of the key components towards technological advancements

which through research and innovation enable development in specific fields. In the academic setting, it ignites every learner's ability, knowledge, and understanding about a specific phenomenon. In this case, the rating of the pupils may serve as the benchmark to figure out what methods and procedures that may be utilized for adoption or application. In terms of academic performance in Science, majority of Grade 3 pupils, 30.85% and 36.25%, have performed very satisfactorily in SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. Moreover, majority of Grade 6 pupils have performed very satisfactorily with 33.02% and 35.32%, respectively. These implies that the majority of the pupils were equipped with the learning competencies in Science as they have completed the key stages. However, there were a stable number of pupils who did not meet the expectations, approximately 3% among Grade 3 learners and almost 1% among Grade 6 learners. There is a remarkable decrease in outstanding performers from Grade 3 with 20-21% to Grade 6 with 17.35% and even lower to 14.43% on the later year. This implies to potential challenges in learning progression, increasing complexity of learning competencies, and pupils' engagement and motivation. Thus, a need for enhancement program to sustain potential outstanding achievers and remediation activities among targeted fairly satisfactory learners and those who did not meet the expectations may be the areas of intervention to attain better outcomes of pupils reaching higher levels of achievement in Science as they shift from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

In the study of Decano et al. (2021), pedagogical influence, intrinsic pupil factor, and learning environment, were significantly associated with pupils' academic achievement in Science with employed curriculum spiral progression. It suggests policy-review, support for pupils and teachers, and improved learning environment. Moreover, Tsaliki et al. (2024) have found that if teachers were equipped with content knowledge mastery in Science, and experience in utilizing inquiry-based approach, adaptability to the changes in science curriculum is more effective. This emphasizes the provision of adequate training programs focused on lesson planning aligned with this teaching strategy and opportunity to redefine practice through the process of trial-and-error.

Performance of Teachers based on IPCRF

This section presents the performance level of the teachers based on the IPCRF for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. Three PPST strands were repeated among the twenty-five assessed PPST strands, along with the *Plus Factor,* which were clustered into five KRAs. Key Results Area 1 emphasizes teachers' competencies to apply content knowledge within and across subject areas. It includes the application of content within and across curriculum teaching areas. Table 6 shows a consistent outstanding performance of teachers in all strands (PPST 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6) under Key Results Area (KRA) 1, with an average mean score of 4.86 and 4.70 in two school years. The "application of content knowledge" got the highest average mean, while "literacy and numeracy

strategies" have been recorded with lowest average mean. Additionally, a notable slight decrease in the mean scores between two school years, though interpreted as outstanding means a need for continuous coaching and implementation of capacity programs that sustain the exemplary performance among teachers and mitigate further potential decline in these strands.

These findings denote teachers valued careful planning of instruction that cultivates higher order thinking skills, literacy and numeracy skills, comprehension of language, and most especially the application of learning competencies, not only within and across subject areas, but also in real-life. They were also highly competent with the content knowledge which is important in the effective facilitation of learning. However, there may be challenges encountered by the teachers in the later year, which caused the decline in the performance, thus peer coaching or mentoring is vital, especially to novice teachers. In addition, enhancement programs refining integration of literacy and numeracy into practice shall be strengthened.

Table 6

Performance of Teachers in KRA 1

Strand	SY 2022-2023								SY 2023-2024							
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Domain 1: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy																
PPST 1.1* Content knowledge and its application within and across curriculum areas	4.94	O	4.93	O	4.87	O	4.91	O	4.89	O	4.55	O	4.84	O	4.76	O
PPST 1.4* Strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy	4.69	O	4.97	O	4.89	O	4.85	O	4.59	O	4.49	VS	4.82	O	4.63	O
PPST 1.5* Strategies for developing critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills	4.77	O	4.89	O	4.84	O	4.83	O	4.76	O	4.52	O	4.82	O	4.70	O

PPST 1.6 Mother Tongue, Filipino and English in teaching and learning									4.75	O	4.58	O	4.84	O	4.72	O
Average	4.80	O	4.93	O	4.87	O	4.86	O	4.75	O	4.53	O	4.83	O	4.70	O

*Note: *Repeated PPST strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.*

Table 7
Performance of Teachers in KRA 2

Strand	SY 2022-2023								SY 2023-2024							
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Domain 2: Learning Environment																
PPST 2.1 Learner safety and security									4.62	O	4.56	O	4.86	O	4.68	O
PPST 2.2 Fair learning environment									4.54	O	4.53	O	4.82	O	4.63	O
PPST 2.3 Management of classroom structure and activities	4.85	O	4.71	O	4.78	O	4.78	O								
PPST 2.6 Management of learner behavior	4.80	O	4.70	O	4.84	O	4.78	O								
Domain 3. Diversity of Learners																
PPST 3.1 Learners' genders, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences	4.82	O	4.68	O	4.79	O	4.76	O								

PPST 3.2 Learners' linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds											4.79	O	4.48	VS	4.62		O	4.63		O
PPST 3.5 Learners from indigenous groups											4.65	O	4.31	VS	4.61		O	4.53		O
Average	4.82	O	4.69	O	4.80	O	4.77	O	4.65	O	4.47	VS	4.73		O	4.62		O		

*Note: *Repeated PPST strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.*

In a related study of Manigbas et al. (2023), teachers were found to have high levels of competency in content knowledge and pedagogy. Their findings have revealed that peers and mentors have been most influential to their practice, while demographic profile has been significantly associated with application of content knowledge and use of languages as medium of instruction. Quigley (2023) noted that teachers who possess strong pedagogical content knowledge are more successful in presenting lessons clearly and accessibly, which enhances learning outcomes. Schatz-Oppenheimer and Goldenberg (2023) have emphasized the benefits of mentoring to professional development, not just of the novice teachers, but also to the mentors themselves. Wood and Andrew (2022) have stressed the potential of learning study, a collaborative professional development practice, in developing teaches' content knowledge and pedagogy.

Key Results Area 2: Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners, centered to manage the learning environment, and address the learning diversity of learners. The performance of teachers along KRA 2 as shown in Table 7, reveals to be outstanding in all strands within the two school years, with an average mean score of 4.77 and 4.62, respectively. The strands with the highest mean rating were "management of classroom structure and activities" and "management of learner behavior", both garnered 4.78 average weighted mean, while "learners from indigenous group" gathered the lowest average mean score, with 4.53 mean rating. The results indicate a strong level of teachers' competence in managing learning environment that fosters safety and security, fairness, collaborative and independent meaningful exploration, and positive discipline. Teachers were also able to engage a teaching-learning process that caters to the learners' diverse needs and backgrounds. Yet, a slight decrease on the performance level particularly in PPST 3.2 and 3.5, implies to the possible challenges that have been encountered

by the teachers in these areas, most especially in District B.

Therefore, continuous professional development in addressing the diverse needs of learners, shall be given ample attention and support. Given that the United Nations SDG Target 4 aims for quality inclusive education, a focus on refining teachers practice on understanding learners' backgrounds, and how to curate an environment that welcomes diversity as an opportunity for more meaningful learning and healthy wellbeing is crucial. It is corroborated by the study of Arias et al. (2023) which identified the eight main themes of challenges in the implementation of inclusive education in Asia, namely, lack of resources, limited targeted trainings, mismatched policies, inadequate support from the government, curriculum implementation, assessment and monitoring, limited awareness, and partnership with stakeholders. It has recommended enhancement of professional development, adequate support and fund allocation from the administrators, and policy review. Fernandez et al. (2023) emphasized the role of teacher education institutions in developing the attitude of pre-service teachers on diversity. The findings revealed that 62.7% of pre-service teacher respondents of University of the Basque Country in Spain has never interacted with individuals with ability difficulties. Furthermore, Akbar et al. (2023) have stressed the role of technology, adaptation of the curriculum and the teachers' professional development in encouraging inclusive education.

Table 8

Performance of Teachers in KRA 3

Strand	SY 2022-2023								SY 2023-2024							
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Domain 4: Curriculum Planning																
PPST 4.1 Planning and management of teaching and learning process	4.72	O	4.89	O	4.84	O	4.81	O								
PPST 4.2 Learning outcomes aligned with learning competencies									4.29	VS	4.77	O	4.70	O	4.59	O
PPST 4.4 Professional collaboration to enrich teaching practice	4.46	VS	4.48	VS	4.52	O	4.49	VS								

PPST 4.5 Teaching and learning resources including ICT	4.67	O	4.71	O	4.76	O	4.72	O										
Domain 5. Assessment and Reporting																		
PPST 5.3 Feedback to improve learning									4.68	O	4.39	VS	4.56	O	4.54	O		
PPST 5.5 Use of assessment data to enhance teaching and learning practices and programs									4.26	VS	4.61	O	4.53	O	4.47	VS		
Average	4.62	O	4.69	O	4.71	O	4.67	O	4.41	VS	4.59	O	4.60	O	4.53	O		

*Note: *Repeated PPST strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.*

Key Results Area 3 is designed to assess the performance of teachers, particularly in curriculum planning and assessment and reporting to ensure that the teaching techniques and practices were effectively integrated based on the standards and requirements aligned in the planning. As shown in Table 8, teachers' performance in KRA 3 has been outstanding for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024, with an average mean score of 4.67 and 4.53, respectively. The PPST 4.1 got the highest average mean score (4.81) while PPST 5.5 got 4.47, the lowest average mean. The results entail teachers were highly competent in planning and implementing sequenced learning and teaching process, achieve learning outcomes based on the learning competencies, develop appropriate learning materials, and provide appropriate and timely feedback to learners. Teachers may have perform very satisfactorily in utilizing assessment data and participating to peer discussion for improved teaching pedagogy, yet the decline in the performance in these strands denotes a need for enrichment teacher training programs, LAC sessions, or FGDs focused on the review and update on the trends in assessment of learning, along with the appropriate interpretation and utilization of data, helpful to a better instructional practice. Effective assessment practice may help teachers identify learning gaps and least learned skills of immediate pupils inside their classroom, and craft a more targeted intervention that may help learners achieve higher learning outcomes. Lam et al. (2024) highlight the

importance of developing professional development programs in enhancing teachers' confidence in achieving positive student outcomes and belief in their own effectiveness which poses a valuable impact to the formative assessment and overall teaching practice. It is corroborated by the study of Uzorka et al. (2024) which concluded that in-service training significantly correlates with quality of teaching and better academic outcomes. It also emphasized that collaborative peer discussions, applied training sessions and continuous targeted professional development programs need to be strengthened.

Table 9

Performance of Teachers in KRA 4

Strand	SY 2022-2023															
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Domain 5: Assessment and Reporting																
PPST 5.1 Design, selection, organization and utilization of assessment strategies	4.73	O	4.90	O	4.81	O	4.81	O								
PPST 5.2 Monitoring and evaluation of learner progress and achievement	4.65	O	4.63	O	4.52	O	4.60	O								
PPST 5.4 Communication of learner needs, progress and achievement to key stakeholders	4.81	O	4.64	O	4.53	O	4.66	O								
Domain 6. Community Linkages and Professional Engagement																
PPST 6.2 Engagement of parents and the wider school community in the educative process									4.24	VS	4.54	O	4.64	O	4.47	VS

Domain 7. Personal Growth and Professional Development																		
PPST 7.3 Professional links with colleagues									4.12	VS	4.54	O	4.59	O	4.42	VS		
PPST 7.4 Professional reflection and learning to improve practice									4.34	VS	4.55	O	4.52	O	4.47	VS		
Average	4.73	O	4.72	O	4.62	O	4.69	O	4.24	VS	4.54	O	4.59	O	4.45	VS		

*Note: *Repeated PPST strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts.*
Data retrieved from November to December 2024.

Key Results Area 4 features performance of teachers leveraging knowledge and capabilities through assessment and reporting, linking connections, and fostering personal and character growth. The results in Table 9 have revealed the teachers' performance in Key Results Area 4 has been outstanding for SY 2022–2023 with an average mean score of 4.69, while a stable very satisfactory performance was observed in SY 2023–2024 with an average mean score of 4.45. Also, it shows that PPST 5.1 strand got the highest mean rating with 4.81, while PPST 7.3 strand with the lowest mean rating of 4.42. Overall, it shows that teachers were highly competent in utilizing assessment strategies, monitoring pupils' progress, and communicating learners' achievement to stakeholders. This entails that teachers value timely reporting of pupils' progress to parents in order to address concerns and affirm the impact of their support. However, a stable very satisfactory performance may indicate a good performance, there still a need for more strengthened practice particularly in encouraging the involvement of parents and other stakeholders, linkage with colleagues, and reflection towards own practice.

Wei and Ni (2020) highlights that the awareness of parents of the existing parent association increases their satisfaction and involvement to school programs and activities, especially with consistent communication. It suggests that school administrators improve levels of parents' satisfaction by establishing active parent organizations, timely general assemblies, and partnership in implementing educational policies and programs. Oo et al. (2023) have affirmed the importance of reflective teaching practice as better pupils' performance has been identified using this approach. Furthermore, Didham and Ofei-Manu (2020) value the role of relevant stakeholders in refining and improving research-based formulation of educational policies.

Key Results Area 5 focused on assessing the performance of teachers in terms of professionalism towards teaching philosophy. In light of teachers' performance in KRA 5 and Plus Factor, Table 10 shows an overall outstanding performance across all strands for two school years, with an average mean score of 4.59 for KRA 5,

and an average mean score of 4.69 and 4.54 for "plus factor", respectively. These results denote a strong sense of dignity among teachers and aim for professional development aligned to PPST. Moreover, teachers are willing to perform acts of service beyond what is defined in five KRAs.

In a related study, Zhang et al. (2024) emphasized that ETPD or effective teacher professional development is significantly associated with teachers' motivation, self-belief of effectiveness in promoting pupils' achievement, and caring school community. Osias and Ladica (2024) suggested establishment of targeted professional development plan that highlights high sense of dignity towards teaching profession by embodying accountability and competence, as work ethics has significant impact on teachers' classroom management, professional attitude, and career development.

Table 10

Performance of Teachers in KRA 5 and Plus Factor

Strand	SY 2022-2023								SY 2023-2024							
	District A		District B		District C		Average		District A		District B		District C		Average	
	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI	WM	AI
Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development																
PPST 7.1 Philosophy of teaching	4.40	VS	4.70	O	4.57	O	4.56	O								
PPST 7.5 Professional development goals	4.66	O	4.60	O	4.60	O	4.62	O								
Average	4.53	O	4.65	O	4.59	O	4.59	O								
Plus Factor*	4.68	O	4.81	O	4.59	O	4.69	O	4.33	VS	4.53	O	4.76	O	4.54	O

*Note: *Repeated PPST strand. O—Outstanding, VS—Very Satisfactory, S—Satisfactory, U—Unsatisfactory, P—Poor. WM—Weighted Mean, AI — Adjectival Interpretation. Mean values were interpreted based on the following ranges: 4.500 – 5.000 (Outstanding), 3.500 – 4.499 (Very Satisfactory), 2.500 – 3.499 (Satisfactory), 1.500 – 2.499 (Unsatisfactory), and below 1.499 (Poor). Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Data retrieved from November to December 2024.*

Non-Academic Performance based on KPIs

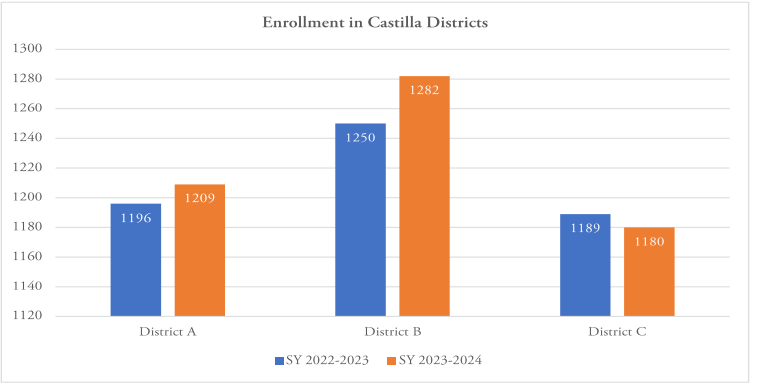
This portion contains data that describes the level of non-academic performance based on KPIs for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. The values were obtained based on the DepEd Order Number 29, s. 2022—Agency Performance Measurement Matrix and Program Implementation Review and Performance Assessment (PIRPA). KPIs include, but are not limited to, enrollment, promotion rate, dropout rate, graduation rate, and cohort survival rate.

Enrollment

This section presents the enrollment in Castilla districts for two consecutive school years. Figure 1 reveals a positive trend in enrollment for Districts A and B, while District C showed a marginal decline. Overall, the total enrollment figures increased from 3,635 to 3,671. This implies that there is a stable and improving access to primary education. Retention strategies employed by the schools sustained the enrollment across grade levels. However, the slight decrease in District C, poses a need for further investigation on the underlying contextual factors such as migration, socio-economic factors, support from stakeholders, and school climate that affect this trend. The school support systems shall strengthen its effort to more accessible education.

Similar studies have revealed that enrollment have been associated with different factors. Okodua and Onye (2022) have reported that the primary demands in primary education of Nigeria between 1980 and 2021 include government spending in education, established wage levels, and ratio of student to teacher. Gao et al. (2023) highlighted that despite the government's effort to accessible and universal basic education in Pakistan, gains were not yet yielded because its literacy rate is one of the lowest among South Asian countries. The findings have also shown the diverse impact of medium of instruction, availability of qualified teachers, single-sex schools, WASH facilities, and security of schools.

Figure 1
Enrollment



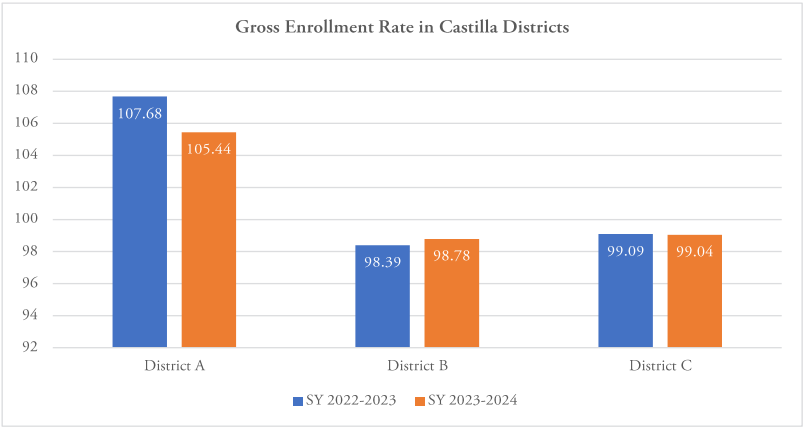
Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Retrieved from November to December 2024

Gross Enrollment Rate

This section portrays the percentage of enrolled pupils, regardless of age, in the elementary schools of Castilla districts for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. Figure 2 shows that the gross enrollment rate in Districts B and C had a marginal increase leaning towards 100%, while in District A, it has declined slightly from 107.68% in SY 2022–2023 to 105.44% in SY 2023–2024. The overall trend signifies expanded access to education; highlights programs addressing barriers and disparities—economic, sociocultural, geographical, high teacher-pupil ratio, limited resources, and support from external stakeholders, promoting inclusive education. On the other hand, gross enrollment rate that exceeds 100%, also entails grade repetition, balik-aral learners, over-aged learners, migration, and school's accessibility to available functional resources and competent teachers. Therefore, poses a challenge to teachers to differentiate instructions to be age and culturally appropriate, as well as sustain conducive learning that caters greater number of pupils inside the classroom. Schools with decreasing gross enrollment rates imply demand for needs assessment analysis, technical assistance, and strong partnership with the local government unit to conduct child mapping, and logistics support to boost higher enrollment rates.

In a related study Khan (2019) has identified factors that contributed significantly to enrollment rates—culture, teachers' caring behavior, and supportive parents. Albert et al. (2023) have pressed concerns on the metrics for United Nations SDG 4 in the Philippines. The current progress among Targets 4.1 (Learning Outcomes), 4.2 (Early Childhood Development), 4.6 (Adult Literacy and Numeracy) and 4.a (Education Facilities) were still insufficient and moderately off-track, and needs strengthened implementation of intervention. But, most notably, Target 4.5 which addresses equal access to education, got a negative Anticipated Progress Index (API) value of -12.8. which denotes to equity gaps intensifying and demands for urgent corrective policy response, investments, and collaboration.

Figure 2
Gross Enrollment Rate



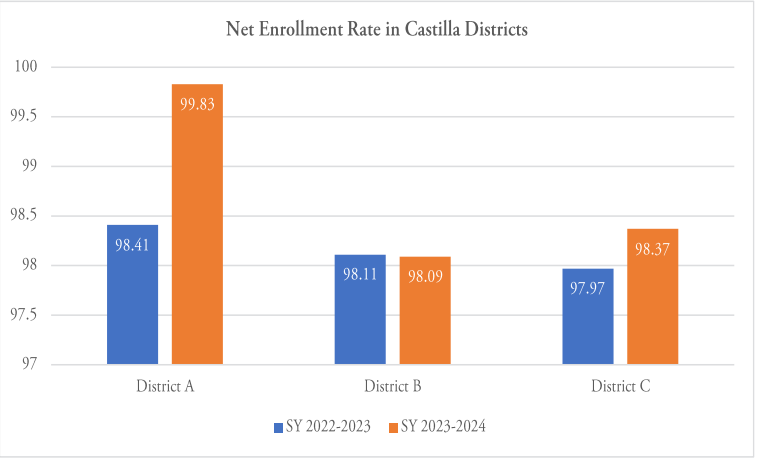
Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Retrieved from November to December 2024

Net Enrollment Rate

This part describes the proportion of enrolled official school-aged pupils in the elementary schools of Castilla districts within two consecutive school years. As shown in Figure 3, a notable growth in District A and C was observed, while District C being consistent on its numbers. The findings reveal that the three districts were able to sustain high net enrollment rate, implying high participation among official school-aged pupils which positively affect cohort survival rate and graduation rate, a good indicator for school internal efficiency. With high enrollment rate, the demand for quality education to keep these learners at school must be met to avoid potential wastage brought by barriers in education. This accounts for shared accountability of the school support system to realize this vision.

In line with this context, Luo et al. (2024) have emphasized that primary and secondary enrollment rate have a potential impact on economic growth by 4% in Middle East countries. Although there is no evident impact in tertiary education enrollment rates, these findings show importance of foundational learning among citizens, economic growth and nation building. Salis (2021) has also revealed that primary enrollment has positive impact but statistically insignificant to economic growth, while secondary enrollment is positively significant to economic growth in Nigeria, where adequate funding at all levels were recommended for inclusive growth.

Figure 3
Net Enrollment Rate

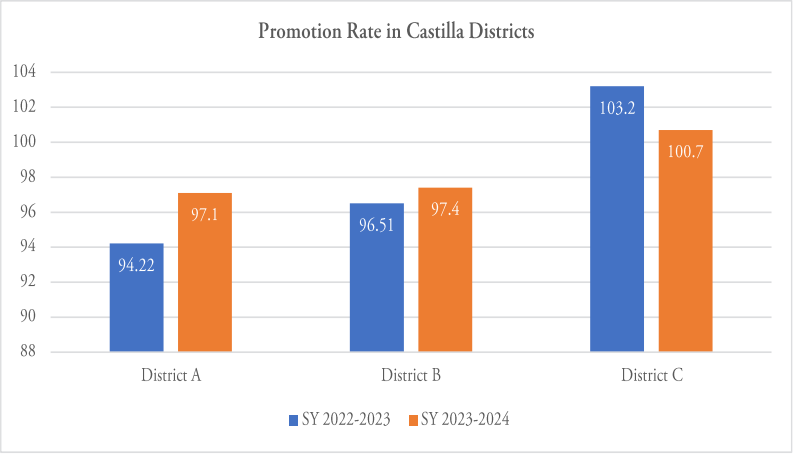


Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Retrieved from November to December 2024

Promotion Rate

This portion demonstrates transition of learners in Castilla districts to higher grade level. Figure 4 shows gain in the net enrollment rate of District A and B both leading to 97%, while District C has been consistent with its performance beyond 100%. This signifies that schools' curriculum implementation and pupils' academic achievement continue to progress. However, a need for strengthened quality of instruction, supportive school climate, and targeted remediation programs aiming towards higher promotion rates that caters the total enrollment, ensuring zero grade repetition and drop out, a key for mitigation of future wastage.

Figure 4
Promotion Rate



Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Retrieved from November to December 2024

Javornik and Mirazchiyski (2023) highlight several factors contributing to effective schools like strong leadership, effective teaching practices, positive school culture, parental involvement, school funding and resources, which challenges under-resourced communities. Salmin and Nihuka (2024) identified barriers in implementing programs focused on achieving high KPI results linked to pupils' academic achievement. School administrators have reported that limited time and difficulties in lesson planning and learning assessment posed significant challenges in effective better KPI program implementation.

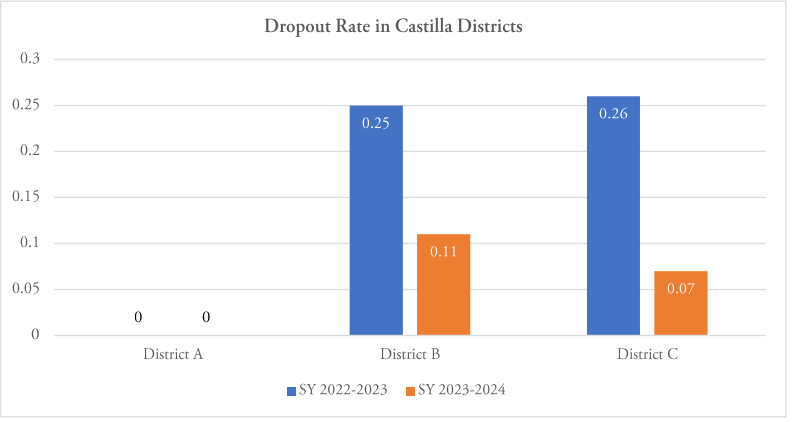
Dropout Rate

This section presents the percentage of learners who didn't continue schooling within the school year. Figure 5 shows that District A consistently maintained a 0% dropout rate across both years, showcasing exemplary student retention. This underscores the effectiveness of retention strategies—ensuring that learners actively attend school and continue to a higher grade level. Meanwhile, District B and C reflected progress with the reduced dropout rates. These findings attribute to effective policies and practices employed by the schools, in partnership with key stakeholders. It suggests that continuous implementation of best practices in strengthening pupil participation at school.

Studies revealed that dropout rate were associated with socioeconomic hardships, parental supervision and family issues, and school climate. As

investigated by Khan (2019), he found that long distances between home and school, increased absenteeism, physical punishment, child labor, fear of teachers, compulsory education, and punitive disciplinary practices in schools were the identified factors that significantly contribute to high dropout rates among pupils. ChildHope Philippines (2024) affirms that pupils from low-income households and struggling with core subjects like math and reading, lowers motivation and self-esteems, which influences their satisfaction in attending school. Additional factors were parental separation, unstable home environment, mental health challenges, poor physical health, negative peer influences, inadequate school facilities, difficulty and sociocultural expectations. Hence, programs that mitigate the impact of these factors shall be institutionalized and developing the school climate that is fair, rich, and safe for the holistic well-being of the pupils be ensured.

Figure 5
Dropout Rate



Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Retrieved from November to December 2024

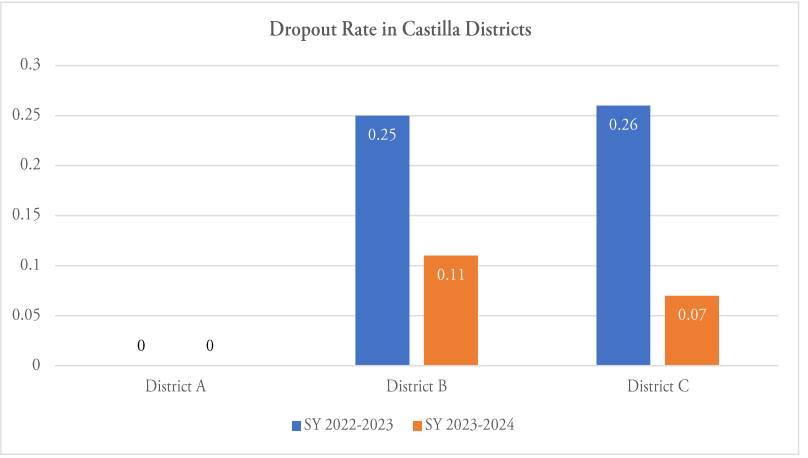
Graduation Rate

This part depicts the percentage of learners who completed compulsory requirements of basic elementary education. Figure 6 reveals improving performance of District A, while District B and C, despite the marginal decline, the results remained at 98% and higher. The overall graduation rate reflects the continued commitment to achieve foundational academic milestone of learners.

Furthermore, the findings denote a need for educational policies helping at-risk learners to complete primary education and engage to secondary and tertiary level of education. Inclusive education shall be strengthened to encourage healthy climate for learners. Collaboration among the stakeholders help initiate programs that will encourage learners' active participation at school.

Nakamura-Thomas et al. (2021) found that both peers and teachers play a significant role in shaping children's attitude toward school attendance. Similarly, Miller (2022) have emphasized that student behavior and motivation are positively influenced by co-curricular and extracurricular activities, addressing the diverse needs of learners up to graduation, which encourages social participation and belongingness.

Figure 6
Graduation Rate



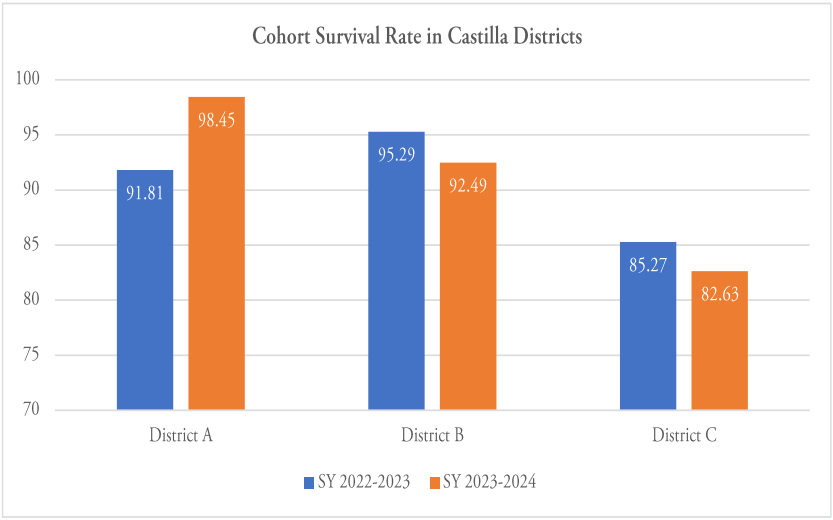
Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Retrieved from November to December 2024

Cohort Survival Rate

This portion reflects the efficiency of educational systems and long-term retention of learners until graduation. In Figure 7, District A has showed positive trend on its cohort survival rate from 91.81 up to 98.45%. Districts B and C experienced modest decline from 95.29% to 92.49% and 85.27% to 82.63%, respectively. These findings rise a demand for further investigation on factors and practices which influenced the variation of trend across three districts and explore on the implementation of best practices that will lead to higher and consistent performance in cohort survival. This calls for initiatives that strengthens the

participation and retention rate of pupils in each grade level, contributing to sustained cohort survival rate, like guidance and counseling programs, pupils' individual profiling, strong home and school partnership and positive learning environment. Dalisay et al. (2024) have considered financial challenges, academic pressure and lack of family support as factors affecting cohort survival and retention rates. Njuguna (2021) highlighted that other related factors linked to public elementary schools in Murang'a South Sub Country were appropriate use of medium of instruction, ineffective monitoring of independent learning, inadequate assessment and feedback, lack of shared vison and mission, and poor management of facilities and resources.

Figure 7
Cohort Survival Rate



Source: Offices of the School Principal in Castilla Districts. Retrieved from November to December 2024

Relationship among the Levels of School Heads' Performance, Teachers' Performance, Pupils' Academic Performance, and KPIs in SY 2022–2023

This part discusses the relationship of the performance of school heads, pupils, teachers, and key performance indicators of elementary schools in Castilla districts in SY 2022–2023. Table 11 presents the findings of Pearson r correlation analysis, where a strong positive but statistically not significant relationship was found between the performance of school heads and teachers with .34 r value and p value of .29. It also reveals that weak to moderate but not significant relationship was associated with school heads' performance and academic performance of

grade three pupils across core subject areas, Filipino, English, Mathematics, and Science, with its p-values .39, .47, .99, and .49, respectively. Negative weak to moderate but not significant relationship was identified between school heads and grade six pupils' academic performance along Filipino (r=-.15, p=.65), English (r=-.20, p=.53), Mathematics (r=-.27, p=.40), and Science (r=-.07, p=.84).

In terms of school heads and KPIs performance, it demonstrated a positive weak to strong but statistically not significant relationship in gross enrollment rate (r=.00, p=.98) and cohort survival rate (r=.52, p=.09), while, the results for promotion rate (r=-.19, p=.55), graduation rate (r=-.01, p=.97) and dropout rate (r=-.08, p=.81), showed a negative weak association but not significant relationship with school heads' performance.

Table 11

Relationship of Performance among School Heads, Pupils, Teachers, and Key Performance Indicators in Castilla Districts in SY 2022-2023

	1	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	3	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
1 SH Perf	1														
2.1 AcP Fil 3	.28	1													
2.2 AcP Eng 3	.23	.95**	1												
2.3 AcP Math 3	.00	.91**	.94**	1											
2.4 AcP Sci 3	.22	.79**	.89**	.86**	1										
2.5 AcP Fil 6	-.15	.14	.17	.18	.35	1									
2.6 AcP Eng 6	-.20	.10	.15	.22	.48	.64*	1								
2.7 AcP Math 6	-.27	.12	.13	.25	.45	.59*	.97**	1							
2.8 AcP Sci 6	-.07	.05	.16	.19	.53	.58*	.92**	.89**	1						
3 Tch Perf	.34	.41	.46	.39	.53	.37	.32	.29	.53	1					

4.1 Grs ER	.01	.20	.09	.12	.04	-.51	.02	.10	-.06	-.01	1				
4.2 Prom R	-.19	.01	.10	.11	.08	-.07	.10	.10	.13	-.21	-.30	1			
4.3 Grad R	-.01	-.20	-.01	-.11	.11	-.09	-.06	-.16	.05	-.35	-.51	.50	1		
4.4 DO R	-.08	.05	.06	.06	.02	.16	.20	.12	.18	.28	-.35	.21	.13	1	
4.5 Chrt SR	.52	-.08	-.05	-.11	.08	-.13	.19	.06	.11	-.18	-.07	.19	.25	.08	1

*Note: ** 0.01 level of significance. *0.05 level of significance. Shading intensity reflects correlation strength based on Hemphill's (2003) thresholds.*

1-SH Perf (School Heads' Performance)

2.1-AcP Fil 3 (Academic Performance in Filipino 3)

2.2-AcP Eng 3 (Academic Performance in English 3

2.3-AcP Math 3 (Academic Performance in Mathematics 3)

2.4-AcP Sci 3 (Academic Performance in Science 3)

2.5-AcP Fil 6 (Academic Performance in Filipino 6)

2.6-AcP Eng 6 (Academic Performance in English 6)

2.7-AcP Math 6 (Academic Performance in Mathematics 6)

2.8-AcP Sci 6 (Academic Performance in Science 6)

3-Tch Perf (Teachers' Performance)

4.1-Grs ER (Gross Enrollment Rate)

4.2-Prom R (Promotion Rate)

4.3-Grad R (Graduation Rate)

4.4-DO R (Dropout Rate)

4.5-Chrt SR (Cohort Survival Rate)

Based on these results, the null hypothesis was accepted with regards to the appraisal of significant relationship among school heads, teachers, pupils, and KPIs, where all r values were interpreted not significant at 95% confidence level. These findings suggest for policies that institutionalize contextualized support among school heads through professional development programs that aid in identifying and addressing the mediating factors and establishment of needs assessment analysis that may contribute in realizing positive impact among pupils, teachers and schools' KPIs. School heads as managers have a vital role in the transformation of the school in partnership with the stakeholders, hence it suggests immediate technical assistance in order to implement high quality clientele satisfaction in terms of access, equity, quality, and resilience and well-

being. Moreover, Basic Education Development Plan 2030 emphasized the importance of governance as enabling mechanism for the realization of these targets.

In a similar study, Isoye et al. (2024) have found no significant relationship between school head leadership and academic achievement, which suggests that employed practices of school principals be elevated to outstanding level. Increased leadership behavior ensures improvement in the school setting and contributes to better academic achievement. Bluestein and Golschmidt (2021) emphasized that engaging leadership practices, even aligned to proposed ones, don't immediately occur but accrue over time. Hence, indicates a need for further systematic study and investigation of specific leadership practices that impact academic progress over time.

Moreover, the results have also revealed that the academic performance of Grade 3 and Grade 6 pupils across subject areas were strongly correlated with its p-values lower than 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. This signifies that the higher academic performance in languages denotes to a better academic achievement in Mathematics and Science and vice-versa. These findings were corroborated on socio-cultural theory of development which highlights the crucial role of internalized social language and external speech to mental reasoning and mastering of learning competencies.

It implies that literacy instruction both in Filipino and English shall be enriched, while intervention and remediation programs be strengthened for struggling and non-readers to help them achieve better potential in developing numeracy and scientific skills. This also encourages the school heads to conduct professional development training for teachers focused on upskilling strategies in literacy instruction and integrative-holistic teaching pedagogy. Adequate support shall be provided in securing availability of resources and instructional materials. It also suggests promotion of stakeholders' high-valued commitment as partners in achieving academic excellence for all learners. Theoretically, attaining better learning outcomes will accrue a positive impact in key performance indicators—limit for potential dropouts and grade repeaters. On the long run, schools with competent graduates will encourage higher enrollment rates.

Aquino et al. (2021) highlighted that school head leadership is independent of teachers' performance or vice-versa, regardless of employed practice. It was supported by Estrada and Gumban (2024) which stressed that even though the school head's effectiveness influences how teachers perform and interact with learners, teachers also have individual characteristics that are uncontrollable. It indicates that it is still up to the teachers on how they will be influenced and behave. Hence, it notes the importance of shared vision and goal among its stakeholders—the school support system.

Relationship among the Levels of School Heads' Performance, Teachers' Performance, Pupils' Academic Performance, and KPIs in SY 2023–2024

This section presents the relationship of the performance among school heads, teachers, pupils and KPIs for SY 2023–2024. As shown in Table 12, it is notable that there is a strong positive correlation between school heads' performance and teachers' performance with .68 r value and p value of .02. This means that improved school heads' performance has significantly contributed to better teachers' performance or vice-versa.

Also, it shows the relationship between school heads' performance and pupils' academic performance both in Grade 3 and Grade 6 were not statistically significant, even though there's a range of weak to strong positive relationships. In terms of the relationship between school heads' performance and KPIs, a varying degree of association has been found but still, it is not significant with garnered p-values greater than the level of significance.

Table 12

Relationship of Performance among School Heads, Pupils, Teachers, and Key Performance Indicators in Castilla Districts for SY 2023-2024

	1	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	3	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
1 SH Perf	1														
2.1 AcP Fil 3	.21	1													
2.2 AcP Eng 3	.05	.69*	1												
2.3 AcP Math 3	.01	.71*	.78**	1											
2.4 AcP Sci 3	.13	.76**	.79**	.91**	1										
2.5 AcP Fil 6	.38	.66*	.31	.42	.47	1									
2.6 AcP Eng 6	.26	.25	.10	.15	.24	.80**	1								
2.7 AcP Math 6	.15	.36	.17	.41	.42	.84**	.93**	1							
2.8 AcP Sci 6	.28	.45	.24	.46	.52	.89**	.88**	.96**	1						

3 Tch Perf	.68*	.31	.11	.07	.30	.49	.51	.34	.43	1					
4.1 Grs ER	-.22	-.11	-.26	-.20	-.42	.03	.12	.10	-.09	-.44	1				
4.2 Prom R	.01	.31	.44	.62*	.66*	-.01	-.22	.01	.14	.03	-.77**	1			
4.3 Grad R	.02	-.15	.07	.15	.09	.06	.25	.35	.31	-.38	.16	.18	1		
4.4 DO R	.43	.07	.20	-.09	.14	-.04	.22	-.00	-.03	.55	-.30	.08	.04	1	
4.5 Chrt SR	-.04	.28	.53	.26	.10	.02	-.07	-.03	-.09	-.42	.28	.06	.43	.16	1

*Note: ** 0.01 level of significance. *0.05 level of significance. Shading intensity reflects correlation strength based on Hemphill's (2003) thresholds.*

1-SH Perf (School Heads' Performance)

2.1-AcP Fil 3 (Academic Performance in Filipino 3)

2.2-AcP Eng 3 (Academic Performance in English 3

2.3-AcP Math 3 (Academic Performance in Mathematics 3)

2.4-AcP Sci 3 (Academic Performance in Science 3)

2.5-AcP Fil 6 (Academic Performance in Filipino 6)

2.6-AcP Eng 6 (Academic Performance in English 6)

2.7-AcP Math 6 (Academic Performance in Mathematics 6)

2.8-AcP Sci 6 (Academic Performance in Science 6)

3-Tch Perf (Teachers' Performance)

4.1-Grs ER (Gross Enrollment Rate)

4.2-Prom R (Promotion Rate)

4.3-Grad R (Graduation Rate)

4.4-DO R (Dropout Rate)

4.5-Chrt SR (Cohort Survival Rate)

On another note, the relationship among the pupils' performance across subject areas has been found to have a consistent significant relationship since the previous year, with r values interpreted with strong positive correlation. Remarkably, the academic performance of Grade 3

pupils in Mathematics and Science have a strong positive and significant relationship with promotion rate with .62 and .66 r value, respectively. This reveals the importance of attaining high levels of foundational competencies for learners to perform more complex skills as they move to higher grade levels and maintain high retention rates. However, the promotion rate has been revealed to have a strong negative correlation with the gross enrollment rate, with -.77 r value. This means that high gross enrollment rate doesn't always construe to high academic success. However, it denotes to experienced potential challenges in promoting inclusivity for grade repeaters, transferee, balik-aral and over-aged learners, which lead to the decline in promotion rate. It suggests for teachers' professional development in addressing the diverse needs of learners and strong

support from the school heads in establishing a positive and healthy school climate for all.

These findings imply that the practices that contribute to the level of performance of school heads, teachers, pupils and in the KPIs that have manifested positive significant impact shall be continued and strengthened. Theoretically, the acceleration of school's performance lies in the effective and high level of performance among its key stakeholders which leads to collective and interrelated positive impact towards school's success. Hence, entails that shared strong commitment and level of excellence are crucial in delivering quality education for all. It clearly serves as a picture for school leaders, policymakers, external stakeholders, and future researchers to craft and implement policies, regulations, and measures that robust support to ensure and foster educational growth that is continuous, consistent, and sustainable.

In the study of Chombo (2020), the strong working relationship between principals and school-based members has driven discipline among learners and unity within the community. Similarly, Tang (2023) affirmed that effective school leadership practices affect classroom management and the overall school climate.

School Improvement Plan for SY 2025–2026

The proposed school improvement plan was designed to strengthen and enhance programs which aims to contribute to the Department of Education's commitment in upholding UN SDG 4. This strategic plan is anchored on the BEDP 2022–2030 National Planning Framework, incorporating the MATATAG agenda. Key interventions were recommended for SY 2025–2026 grounded on the needs assessment analysis of the evidence-based data of Castilla districts from baseline SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. A Municipal Target for Access and Quality was also projected that may serve as a guide in monitoring and evaluating mechanisms of schools in the attainment of intermediate outcomes. The plan may be contextualized based on the school situational analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

The comprehensive review of elementary schools' performance in Castilla districts highlights an overall outstanding performance. School heads performed exemplary in their leadership roles. Also, high levels of performance were exhibited by the pupils and teachers, while an overall positive trajectory in the key performance indicators of the schools was observed. Moreover, a significant relationship has been found between school heads' performance and teachers' performance in SY 2023–2024. However, the relationship in the performance

levels of school heads with the pupils, and KPIs were statistically not significant in SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024. The proposed school improvement plan for SY 2025–2026 is a strategic and evidence-based response to the identified needs revealed on the analysis of performance indicators in Castilla districts.

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